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69th Annual Fair Parade celebrates local history with nostalgic theme

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

While the 69th edition of the Georgia Mountain Fair may have officially begun on Friday, July 19, the unofficial start took place Saturday, July 20, as hundreds of spectators lined Main Street to see the annual parade roll through Hiawassee.

The theme this year – “Making Memories Since 1950” – celebrated days gone by, and everyone loved seeing the classic cars, fashions and motifs of yesteryear.

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton and his wife Crystal led the 1.6-mile journey through town to the Fairgrounds, with 25 floats featuring candy-tossing float riders in tow.

“My kids love to see who can collect the most candy,”

parade attendee Matthew Barrett said. “All three of them race to the edge of the sidewalk as fast as they can and try to pick up as much candy as they can as each float goes by throwing candy.”

“The whole family is here this year for a change. Now that my parents are retired, we can do things together as a family, and they get to spend time with their grandkids. My brother Andrew and his daughter are here, too.”

This year, the parade saw Mitchell Grimsley and Adrian Hooper of the Towns County High School Bass Fishing Team serving as Parade Grand Marshals, riding down Main Street in their bass fishing boat along with their families.

Crowds of people shouted in excitement to Grimsley and Hooper, congratulating them for qualifying for the

Bassmaster High School National Championship Tournament Champ.

The parade acted as a sendoff for the boys as they prepare to leave for the tournament in Paris, Tennessee, in just a few weeks.

This year’s First-Place float featured the Lady Indians Softball Team, which won \$2,700 in prize money donated by Towns County native Bob Cloer.

Several upgrades have been made at Lowell Nicholson Field ahead of the 2019-2020 season, and the \$2,700 will go toward helping the Lady Indians update their sound system and eventually enclose their batting cages, said Head Softball Coach Clay Livingston.

“It has been unbelievable the support we have had,” Livingston said. “When the

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Mitchell Grimsley and Adrian Hooper of the Towns County High School Bass Fishing Team served as Parade Grand Marshals in the 2019 Fair Parade. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Carnival thrills Fair attendees with rides, games for the whole family

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Every year, the Georgia Mountain Fair draws tens of thousands of people to the North Georgia Mountains, thanks in part to the exciting rides available at the carnival.

The carnival officially opened up a day before the Fair, on July 18, with the B&K Carnival Company inviting people to come enjoy the midway rides and challenging games.

People filtered in all day to see what the carnival had to offer this year, with folks really beginning to roll into the Fairgrounds as the sun started to set last Thursday.

Rides like the Bumper Cars and Ferris Wheel were popular with carnival attendees looking to embrace a more familiar style of ride with their families.

The Fair brings in large crowds from all over the Southeast, with many people camping at the Fairgrounds all nine days of the annual Fair.

Those from out of state come to the carnival to experience something they might not have back home, all the while taking in the beautiful mountains as they enjoy the rides and more.

“We don’t really have a lot of fairs and carnivals where I’m from,” said Kenzie Waters, who is attending the Fair on vacation from Michigan. “They exist, but they are not as popular as people around



Guests of the 2019 Georgia Mountain Fair enjoying a particularly fast-moving carnival ride last weekend. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

this area make them.

“I just really love the scenery here and the Southern atmosphere. It’s really different than what you find up in Michigan. Although we are only passing through for the day, I would love to come back sometime and experience the Fair in its entirety.”

“I think that people all over the country, even where I’m from, forget to have fun at little community-based events like this. I’m glad I could stop in, and I will remember it for sure.”

Family-based activities make the carnival fun for people of all ages, with children running around to get on all the rides, and parents and grandparents laughing as they watch kids enjoying themselves.

“I just love the carnival,” said attendee Diana Potter. “I brought my grandson here for the day just to experience the Fair and carnival, and it’s really fun for him to try these new things, because he’s only 5

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Brothers admits to groping girl, likely avoids prison due to Ralston tactics

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

BLAIRSVILLE – Her case helped change state law, making it easier for future victims of sexual assault and other crimes to find justice. But at what personal cost?

The nightmare started in 2012, when she was just 14 years old. Her family had taken in a man they trusted named Paul Jason Brothers, a traveling minister from Ohio who preached at their home church of North Mt. Zion Church of God in Hiawassee.

It was almost unthinkable that a man of faith like Brothers could be capable of sexually assaulting anyone, let alone a child. But one night, as the rest of the family slept, Brothers forced himself on her and, according to his victim, raped and molested her.

As uncovered by the investigation into the horrors of that evening, Brothers distanced himself from the family afterward, suddenly telling them, without any explanation, that they could no longer be friends.

The reason for his avoidance became abundantly clear when, several months

later, the victim and her family approached law enforcement with their tragic story, and Brothers was arrested and subsequently indicted for rape in 2013.

Fast forward to 2019 and that girl, who had grown to become a young woman of 21, still sought justice.

So, when Brothers received a specially-set trial date of July 29, 2019, it looked like justice might finally be delivered in a case that had long been delayed through a legal loophole exploited by Brothers’ famous attorney, Georgia House Speaker David Ralston.

In preparation for the case, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley’s office once again presented evidence before a Towns County Grand Jury, which handed up revised charges of statutory rape, two counts of aggravated child molestation, three counts of child molestation and simple assault in May.

At long last, would that wolf in minister’s clothing be made to face the consequences of his terrible actions? The answer, as it turned out, was complicated.

Instead of going to trial, Brothers entered into a plea



Paul Jason Brothers

agreement with Langley’s office.

It was a negotiated deal that required Brothers to publicly admit wrongdoing, and he pleaded guilty to two felony counts of sexual battery on a minor on Wednesday, July 17, at the Union County Courthouse, with Ralston present for the proceedings.

The outcome wasn’t exactly what the victim and her family had hoped for, but they agreed to it, given the age of the case and the victim’s diminished health, as she suffers from a heart

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Bradshaw amends liquor ordinance, highlights good FY18 audit report

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw held the first reading of an amendment to the previously enacted Alcohol by the Pour Ordinance in his regular meeting on July 16.

Bradshaw enacted the ordinance in March of this year, after liquor by the drink won popular support in an election referendum last November.

What he did on July 16 was the first step toward amending the ordinance to clarify some of the language – originally taken directly from state law – surrounding how liquor by the drink owners are to pay their taxes.

“If you own a restaurant that only serves beer and wine, taxes are paid to us by the supplier, not the restaurant owner,” Bradshaw said.

“However, the liquor by the pour is paid to us by the owner, which is 3%.”

The second reading of the amendment will be held in a special called meeting on Friday, July 26, at the courthouse. People can contact the Commissioner’s Office this week to find out what time the meeting will take place.

Also in the July 16 meeting, Bradshaw discussed several positive findings from the county’s 2018 financial audit, including a general revenue increase of nearly \$600,000, due in large part to adjustments he was able to make early in his current, first term.

“I am very proud of the increase in the revenue of \$600,000,” Bradshaw said. “We couldn’t do it without a good economy, and I understand that.”

In addition to a good



911 Director Marty Roberts explaining the upcoming E-911 upgrades in the July 16 county meeting. Photo by Chad Stack

economy, Bradshaw credited his office staff, as well as 911 Director Marty Roberts, Recreation Director Matthew

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MIAP volunteer explains cremains recovery process at veteran fundraiser

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Club 66 Veterans and Associates hosted a fundraiser on Saturday, July 20, to benefit the Missing in America Project.

MIAP is a nationwide effort consisting of the search for unclaimed veteran cremains with aims of honorably putting those remains to rest in the way each forgotten veteran deserves.

John Newport, a volunteer with MIAP Georgia, was the guest speaker at the July 20 fundraiser, telling people about the specifics of MIAP and how the project works.

“We are a veteran recovery organization, and we owe it to

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MIAP Georgia volunteer John Newport spoke about the veteran cremains recovery process at the Club 66 MIAP fundraiser last weekend. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Carter indicted for attempted murder; admits to shooting, concealing evidence

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

BLAIRSVILLE – A Union County Grand Jury has indicted Crystal LeAnn Carter for attempted murder and aggravated assault in the September 2018 shooting of Young Harris.

The GBI initially brought a charge of aggravated assault against Carter in Union County, and upon further investigation, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley decided to pursue an attempted murder charge as well.

Handed up on July 11, the indictment comes about a month and a half after a May 29 bond hearing in which Carter admitted to shooting Henderson and attempting to conceal evidence of the crime by throwing the gun in

Lake Chatuge and burning her clothes with Henderson’s blood on them.

Following the shooting, Carter eluded authorities for more than seven months until she was finally apprehended on April 16, 2019, at the residence of a man named Joe Tiger in Hayesville, North Carolina.

In the May bond hearing, the assistant public defender representing Carter attempted to paint her in a sympathetic light, highlighting her church attendance, willingness to pay child support, longstanding medical issues, and lack of any prior serious criminal history, according to court documents.

Superior Court Chief Judge N. Stanley Gunter denied the motion by Carter’s legal counsel to set bond, determining that she was both a flight risk and likely to intimidate the witnesses in the case.

The GBI has alleged that



Crystal Carter

Carter shot her ex-boyfriend Henderson around 7 p.m. on Sept. 8, 2018, at or near a home located at 11 Lindsay Lane in Union County, after which she drove him to Chatuge Regional Hospital in Hiawassee.

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